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PROPOSED U.S. SPECIFICATIONS FOR THE CLASSIFICATION OF DAMAGED
OR REPAIRED PACKAGES OF FRESH FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

INTRODUCTION

Finding a uniform and equitable method of handling claims for produce containers that are delivered in a broken, damaged, or repaired condition is a problem that has received much attention from both the transportation agencies and the produce trade for years. The Agricultural Marketing Service of the U. S. Department of Agriculture has recently been requested by representatives of both the carriers and the produce trade to set up Federal standards for such packages that can be used throughout the country in determining whether or not such packages are damaged, and if so, whether the damage is of a character and degree that the consignee is entitled to claim damages.

These tentative specifications are being issued by the Agricultural Marketing Service after consultation with representatives of the wholesale produce receivers and the carriers. It is the intention to use them for a trial period of 4 months in terminal markets where there is a request for their use by trade organizations or by transportation agencies. Since it is impossible to list all the different conditions that would be encountered, the cases described here will serve as illustrations that will guide the inspectors in classifying packages showing types of damage not specifically covered by these definitions. At the end of this trial period they may be revised and issued as official standards if such action is deemed advisable.

Classification will be made only of packages that have been segregated and are agreed upon by representatives of both sides as being in dispute. It is further agreed that when there are no undamaged containers available for comparison, the general knowledge of the inspector making the classification shall be used as the basis for the determination. Requests for this service may be filed either by representatives of the carrier or the receiver.

CLASSIFICATION OF PACKAGES

A package containing fresh fruits or vegetables shall be classified as GOOD ORDER if it complies with the description of GOOD ORDER for both CONTAINERS and CONTENTS as stated below.

A package containing fresh fruits or vegetables shall be classified as BAD ORDER if it fails to comply with the description for GOOD ORDER for either CONTAINERS or CONTENTS as stated below.

GOOD ORDER CONTAINERS

Containers: GOOD ORDER containers shall have the same general appearance as original containers that have not been racked, broken, or otherwise damaged to an extent that would affect their general appearance. The containers shall have approximately the same strength and rigidity as undamaged containers.

The following points shall NOT be considered sufficient to justify lowering the containers to BAD ORDER:

1. Natural deterioration such as decay, molds, over-maturity, insect damage, disease and freezing shall not be considered in making the classification.
2. Torn paper liners or pads.
3. Damage to containers which can definitely be attributed to flagrantly defective or unsuitable material, design or assembly for the purpose for which used.
4. Disintegration or bursting of sacks associated with or caused by deterioration or nature of the contents.
5. Disintegration or bursting of paper or paper-net sacks associated with or caused by moisture of condensation or body ice.
6. Disintegration or chafing of containers such as sacks caused by being in contact with floor or walls of car when not associated with a shift of the load.

BAD ORDER CONTAINERS

Containers: BAD ORDER shall include all containers which have a missing part or parts, or which are broken or otherwise damaged or racked to an extent that the general appearance is affected or structure materially weakened, except those described under GOOD ORDER CONTAINERS.

The following are the more common causes for lowering containers to BAD ORDER classification:

1. Broken condition or missing or loosened part or parts.
2. Part or parts poorly or insecurely replaced.
3. Both branded sides or more than the equivalent of $\frac{1}{2}$ the branded slats from both sides replaced with plain sides or slats.
4. Replaced part or parts materially different in size, appearance and flexibility.
5. Part or parts designating size, grade, grower numbers, and variety replaced with plain part or parts. If the plain part or parts are marked, must be neat and of the same general type and appearance as the original marking.
6. Both cover cleats on crates so battered, split, or heavily roneiled that it cannot be opened for display.

7. Split solid end if not of practically original strength and rigidity.
8. Label missing or materially disfigured account breakage.
9. Materially stained account water from bunker ice, leaking roof or from being repaired on dirty or wet floor of pier or delivery platform.
10. Dry parts on wet containers when materially affecting appearance.
11. Weak or rickety containers.
12. Racking when exceeding 1 inch, irrespective of size of container.
13. Cinder dust or other similar material which appreciably mars the appearance.
14. Sacks that have been sewed at torn places or at mouth when the appearance is materially affected.
15. Torn holes in sacks from nails and other protruberances in walls or on floors of car.

GOOD ORDER CONTENTS

Contents of GOOD ORDER containers shall have the same general appearance as the contents of original containers that have not been racked, broken, or otherwise damaged. The pack shall be intact and the arrangement shall be the same as in undamaged containers.

The following conditions of the contents shall not be considered sufficient to lower packages to BAD ORDER, providing containers are in GOOD ORDER:

1. Bruising, cuts and chafing caused by an excessive amount of the product or pack ice which is responsible for an abnormal bulge of top or sides of containers such as:
 - (a) Overpacking of bunched asparagus or celery which causes excessive side bulge.
 - (b) Beets, lettuce, pears, peaches, etc., packed with an excessive amount of product which causes bruising in lidding containers.
 - (c) Cuts and bruises caused by pack ice on such products as lettuce, spinach.
2. Damage to protruding or exposed contents in packages that are packed with a part of their contents protruding or exposed, such as:

- (a) Cabbage, romaine, escarole in hampers.
 - (b) Dill, dandelion, root parsley, bunched beets, in crates.
 - (c) Spinach, kale in baskets.
3. Bruising or crushing, caused by product being too tightly packed or due to the use of oversize or irregularly sized contents, such as:
- (a) Melons in crates.
 - (b) Bruising of lettuce in layers in crates.
4. Bruising, chafing or breakage of contents, caused by lack of proper protective materials that are now in common use, such as:
- (a) Liners for Northwestern pear boxes.
 - (b) Cover pads for peaches, plums, etc.
 - (c) Liners for lettuce in crates.
 - (d) Straw, shredded paper or similar material on car floors of sacked loads.
5. Bruising, chafing, cuts, etc., due to the immaturity or over-maturity of the product, such as:
- (a) Immature Bermuda or Northern grown onions.
 - (b) Ripe peaches in baskets.
 - (c) Immature potatoes that may turn brown or under pressure may become flattened or bruised.
6. Damage that can definitely be attributed to improper original loading of cars, such as:
- (a) Bruising and chafing of contents caused by movement of containers in loosely loaded loads or in loads in which contents become damaged by being in contact with walls of car.
7. Slackness or disarrangement of contents due either to
- (1) natural shrinkage, decay or other deterioration, or
 - (2) use of insufficient quantities or incorrect sizes of original contents, such as:
- (a) Bruising, cuts, chafing, etc., caused by movement of contents in slack packs.
 - (b) Decay in peaches, prunes, grapes, tomatoes.

- (c) Using 125 size apples in 100 size pack.
 - (d) Using 7x7 size tomatoes in 6x6 pack.
8. Damage caused by packing products in containers that are not suited for the purpose for which they are used, such as:
- (a) Topped carrots in papernet sacks when top ice is used.
 - (b) Citrus in sacks.
 - (c) Squash in baskets that have become partially decomposed or rotten.
9. Loss of specimens between unbroken original parts of containers.

BAD ORDER CONTENTS

Contents of BAD ORDER containers shall include the contents of packages that have not been restored to the same general condition and appearance as the product in original containers which have not been broken, racked or otherwise damaged, except those described under GOOD ORDER CONTENTS.

The following are the more common causes for lowering contents to BAD ORDER classification:

1. Loss of pack ice by careless or improper handling by carrier representatives in unloading or recooling.
2. Damage to properly packed protruding or exposed contents, which are ordinarily packed with part of contents protruding or exposed, by improper or careless handling by carrier representatives in unloading or recooling.
3. Contents, wraps, or packing material wet or materially stained from bunker ice or leaking roof or on account of being placed on dirty or wet floor of pier or delivery platform.
4. Bruised, cut, crushed or shattered when in excess of that found in the GOOD ORDER containers in the load or lot.
5. Fungus by nails or other foreign objects resulting from breakage or recooling.
6. Packs disarranged account breakage or poorly replaced in recooling.
7. One or more specimens short account breakage or recooling.
8. Repacked with specimens of different size, variety or grade than remainder of contents.
9. Repacked with more or fewer specimens than size marked.

10. Badly disarranged or torn wrappers in repacked wrapped products.
11. Slack pack account repacking.
12. Cinder dust or other similar material which appreciably mars the appearance.
13. Dirty specimens or foreign material included with repacked contents.